

As Commander, Jake met with Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton to discuss issues facing Hispanic veterans. He was selected by the Department of Defense and State to participate in fact-finding missions to Bosnia, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Iraq. He has encouraged young students to continue their education and pursue careers that would further their goals, including careers in the military, just as the Marines helped launch his own career.

Following his years as National Commander, Jake continued to remain an active advocate, serve as a voice for veterans, and recognize the contributions made by the Hispanic community. Jake has been an advocate of education as a way for people, especially Hispanics, to excel and be successful in life. Jake remains an active member of my own Veteran's Committee, carrying on as a voice for our new generation of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, Jake Ignacio Alarid is a man who has selflessly given his time and efforts to the Los Angeles community and to Hispanic veterans across the country. He has become an icon in our community and has impacted the lives of countless men, women, and children during his lifetime. Jake exemplifies the true meaning of service to one's country and service to others, and for that his community is grateful. I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in wishing Jake a very happy 80th birthday.

#### HONORING THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

#### HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 31, 2014*

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä to congratulate them on their Grammy award in the category of Best Orchestral Performance for their recording of Sibelius' first and fourth symphonies. The Minnesota Orchestra is a source of great pride for Minnesotans and is one of the institutions that makes our state's artistic culture so rich.

The Minnesota Orchestra began in 1903, the eighth major symphony orchestra to be established in the United States. Since then, it has represented Minnesota across the globe, performing in over 661 cities worldwide. Renowned composers Aaron Copeland and Igor Stravinsky have both guest-conducted the Orchestra.

Since its early years, the Minnesota Orchestra has been a great asset to our state, producing landmark recordings and touring ambitiously to critical acclaim and full houses. Under the leadership of former musical director Osmo Vänskä, the Orchestra has grown to elite, world-class status. In 2010, The New Yorker wrote of their March 1 performance at Carnegie Hall, "the Minnesota Orchestra sounded, to my ears, like the greatest orchestra in the world."

I felt great sadness, then, when the Orchestra suspended its season two years ago. From October 1, 2012 to January 14, 2014, the Minnesota Orchestra musicians suffered the longest lockout of any American orchestra in history, leading to the resignation of esteemed

conductor Vänskä and significant hardship for the musicians who went without a secure salary or benefits. This was a painful period for Minnesota arts. That's why I was thrilled when both sides were able to reach a contractual agreement earlier this month, and I look forward to seeing the Orchestra return to the stage in February.

The Orchestra has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to artistic excellence and integrity, and this Grammy is well-deserved. I appreciate all that the Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä have done and continue to do for Minnesota, and thank them for their exemplary achievement and service.

#### OPPOSING THE FARM BILL

#### HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 31, 2014*

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in reluctant opposition to the Farm Bill. While there is much to commend in this compromise, I cannot in good conscience vote for a bill that cuts \$8.6 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

I applaud all my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee for their hard work and long hours spent putting this agreement together. Today's bill makes a number of much-needed changes to our nation's agricultural policy. It finally ends the practice of direct payments to farmers in favor of real crop insurance, a laudable achievement that the Agriculture Committee has been working towards for over a decade. The bill expands support for organic foods, local farm-to-table programs, and farmers' market nutrition, all of which I have strongly supported and will continue to champion.

This agreement also maintains important animal welfare provisions. In particular, I am thankful for Congressman SCHRADER's leadership in working to strip the King Amendment, which would have invalidated hundreds of state animal welfare laws, from the conference report. I am also pleased that the committee chose to include animal fighting restrictions that will help to forever end this abhorrent practice by making it a federal crime to attend an animal fighting event.

Unfortunately, beyond these important reforms, a full third of the savings in this bill comes from cuts to SNAP, formerly known as food stamps. SNAP helps millions of Americans living in poverty put food on the table, including nearly 200,000 in Rhode Island. Eighty percent of the households receiving SNAP earn below the federal poverty level, making it a vital form of assistance for countless working families. Today's bill will have a disproportionate effect on low-income seniors, working poor families with children, and individuals with disabilities. And for those who are currently struggling to find work, many of whom have just seen their emergency unemployment benefits expire due to the inaction of this Congress, the loss of SNAP assistance could be a crippling blow. Rhode Island has the highest unemployment rate in the nation; I will not vote to make life more difficult for thousands of our families.

Last year, I joined several of my colleagues in taking the SNAP Challenge, a commitment

to living on no more than \$4.50 per day in food costs. Every member of Congress should experience what it's like to subsist on this pittance amount to better understand the impacts of the decisions we make on the lives of our constituents. Sadly, as we observe the 50th Anniversary of the War on Poverty, the SNAP cuts in today's bill seem to be part of a war on the poor. This is only one element of a worrying trend from the House majority that would lead us toward a world where the rich take care of themselves and the poor fight for the scraps. I hope that my colleagues step back from this misguided policy before it is too late.

Although I am unable to vote for these cuts to food assistance, I will continue to work with my colleagues to promote sensible agricultural policies that promote healthy eating, sustainable farming practices, and ample food for every American.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2642, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

#### HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 29, 2014*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider the Agriculture Act of 2014. While I appreciate the work that has gone into the crafting of this legislation, and the delicate compromise that this bill represents, I will not support the bill before us today because I refuse to support a bill that will increase hunger in America.

Throughout this process I have stood fast with many of my Democratic colleagues in strong opposition to attempts by the House majority to bleed as much money as possible from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The first draft of the House farm bill, which failed, would have cut \$20 billion from SNAP. In the next iteration of the legislation, the Republican response was to simply remove SNAP from the House bill and pass it without a single Democratic vote. When a Republican stand-alone nutrition bill finally came up it was no surprise that the bill proposed a cut of \$40 billion to SNAP.

The bill before us today would cut \$8.6 billion from SNAP. Significantly less than the House Republican proposal, but still more than twice what was proposed in the Senate farm bill initially. Rather than working with Democrats to craft a real strategy to address hunger in America, my Republican colleagues are insistent on stripping funds from this country's most comprehensive and successful anti-hunger program.

According to the most recent USDA data, about 47 million people benefit from SNAP nationally. Last year, on average, 876,266 people in New Jersey participated monthly in SNAP. In New Jersey's 12th Congressional District more than 40 percent of households receiving SNAP have children under 18 and more than 40 percent have at least one person over 60.

Since November 1, 2013, these families have been dealing with cuts to SNAP benefits because of an expiring provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that had